

Transcript: Monitoring Rangeland Conditions

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>> Codie MARTIN (voiceover) What we're wanting is riparian wetland vegetation stabilizing the streambanks, shading water areas and reducing water temperature. This also stabilizes the shorelines and filters sediment.

>> NARRATOR (voiceover) The BLM also monitors streams for water quality.

>> MARTIN (on camera) We want to make sure that the surface and groundwater on Idaho public lands comply with Idaho water quality standards. To do that, we'll take water quality samples and get them tested and making sure we don't exceed any of their existing standards and parameters.

>> NARRATOR (voiceover) The BLM checks on the health of native plant communities, too.

>> MARTIN (voiceover) We're looking for a healthy, diverse – multiple structures, diverse age class, that the native plants are producing seed and look vigorous.

>> NARRATOR (voiceover) The BLM also does plant transects.

>> MARTIN We drop the point down and write whether it's touching litter or a plant – whether it be a shrub. If it is touching a plant, the height of the grasses, forbs or shrubs – we document that to see if we've got adequate sage-grouse habitat. We want to make sure we're providing habitat for nesting for the sage-grouse, which is important. Also, if it's a winter habitat area, we want it tall enough that the brush isn't totally covered up in the snow. So, once it gets to a certain height, then it becomes suitable winter habitat for sage-grouse.

>> NARRATOR (voiceover) The BLM reviews grazing systems with permittees to look for ways to improve management.

>> MARTIN It might be things like changing the season of use, changing the duration that you're in there, having a rest-rotation system, moving water away from a resource of concern, possibly even installing new range improvements – building fences or installing new water facilities for better distribution.

END 1:57